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RECORDS SERVICES DIVISION  
 GENERAL SERVICES OFFICE  
 16 November 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director (Administration)

SUBJECT: Statement of Nonconcurrence in Staff Study Prepared by Organization and Methods Service dated 15 October 1953, Subject: Microfilm Program of the Office of Collection and Dissemination.

As you directed in a meeting held in your office on Friday, 13 November 1953, (attended by Mr. Andrews and Mr. [redacted] of OGD; Mr. Peel, [redacted] of Organization and Methods Service; Col. White and [redacted] of the Office of the DD/A; and [redacted] of the General Services Office), I have prepared the following statement of the reasons for our nonconcurrence in the staff study of 15 October 1953 prepared by Organization and Methods Service, Subject: Microfilm Program of the Office of Collection and Dissemination.

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1. Since the approval of the initial project on 19 December 1951 (Project No. OGD-137-52), we have had several discussions with OGD in an effort to resolve differences of opinion with respect to the implementation of their proposed microfilm project. On each occasion we were advised that they were not ready to discuss it, since the action that they were intending to take was contingent upon the results of research work then in progress for the purpose of developing equipment which would overcome some of the difficulties in the implementation of their proposal. It was understood and agreed by representatives of OGD, [redacted] and myself that action would not be taken to implement the project until the proposal had been reviewed at a joint meeting. Meantime, however, unknown to us, they have procured over \$20,000 worth of equipment in Fiscal Year 1953. We were not aware that they were going to proceed with the implementation of their proposal until in August 1953, when we received a request for alterations in Riverside Stadium, estimated to cost \$7,500. When the question was raised with you at that time by [redacted] you directed Organization and Methods Service to study the problem.

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2. The staff study prepared by Organization and Methods Service was presented to [redacted] on Friday, 16 October 1953, for concurrence. After review, on 23 October 1953, [redacted] established a meeting with [redacted] of [redacted] at the reproduction plant in [redacted] At that time

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certain questions were raised with respect to facts contained in the study, and it was agreed by the GSN analysts that they would attempt to resolve these questions. It was understood that upon further investigation the GSN analysts would contact [redacted] to report on their findings, which would have had the effect of revising the staff study in substantial measure.

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3. On Monday, 9 November 1953, I was called to a meeting in the office of the Chief, GSN Service (Mr. Paol), to discuss the study and changes which were to be made. It was agreed that certain of the recommendations would be revised. In another meeting on Tuesday, 10 November 1953, which I attended in Mr. Paol's office, a paper was presented to me which purported to revise the study and its recommendations. After some discussion, I suggested that the overall problem be discussed among representatives of GSN, GSB, and GSO, but I was advised that this was not possible, as Mr. Amery was ready to take the matter up with you. Therefore, I was unable to pursue the questions which we had concerning the proposal; and the meeting held in your office on Friday, 13 November 1953, was the result.

h. The reasons for our nonconcurrence are as follows:

- a. The scope of the original project proposed by GSB, as represented by the subject staff study, has been exceeded without discussion.
- b. The General Services Office feels that there are alternative methods of solving the problem of GSN with the possibility of lower cost and greater efficiency, which at least deserve discussion and consideration.
- c. The study addresses itself to the question of where and how the microfilming should be done but not to the more important question of should it be done. No question the advisability of microfilming to the extent and for the purposes, as proposed.
- d. This office has not been given the opportunity to resolve the same questions with GSN that had been raised on several occasions many months prior to the undertaking of the study by GSB. The scope of the problem is much greater than represented by the study made by GSB. For that reason, I would like to re-state the problem as we see it:
  - (1) GSN is presently unable to produce, upon the request of analysts, approximately 60% of intelligence documents

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which have been collected by CIA and processed through OGD. (See paragraph 2(b), Page 2, of staff study.)

- (2) Many documents are received by OGD in single copy or in inadequate quantity for initial dissemination.
  - (3) After initial dissemination of documents, OGD is unable to determine specific location of documents which have been disseminated to research activities, and to locate such documents requires excessive time and effort.
  - (4) A more rapid method of reproduction is necessary than is presently available through the use of existing available equipment or reproduction processes.
5. The General Services Office is concerned with the overall proposal in the performance of its functions with respect to (a) records management, (b) vital materials, and (c) printing and reproduction.
  6. The solutions as proposed by OGD (See Appendix C of staff study) to the problem outlined in paragraph 4c above, and our comments on each are as follows:
    - a. OGD Proposal - Microfilm all incoming intelligence documents.

Comment: The Project Review Committee in Project No. OGD-177-52 dated 19 December 1951 approved the "microfilming of all significant incoming intelligence documents". Some effort should be made to develop a means of identifying "significant" documents in order to avoid the microfilming of many documents which do not fall in this category for reference or vital materials purposes, and therefore, may not even have to be retained by the agency. The use of the word "significant" implies that microfilming by OGD should be done on a highly selective basis. This proposal does not intend that this would be done.

- b. OGD Proposal - Microfilm CIA-produced intelligence.

Comment: The study fails to state any reason for the microfilming of CIA-produced intelligence. It is assumed that the only possible reasons may be to provide for (1) vital materials deposits, and (2) requests for documents after initial distribution.

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With respect to vital materials, original documents rather than microfilm are desirable in order that on D-Day chaotic conditions will not arise due to the inability to reproduce copies in adequate volume to satisfy demands of from two to three hundred analysts. Such a number of analysts could not possibly refer to the microfilm at the same time and therefore confusion and chaos would obviously be the result.

Supplemental distribution of CIA-produced intelligence is available through the facilities of the Records Management and Distribution Branch, Records Services Division, General Services Office; therefore, reproduction for this purpose could not be the objective.

- c. OCB Proposal - Disseminate all copies of incoming intelligence documents to research activities.

Comment: OCB by this proposal will forego any effort to control the use of intelligence documents by research activities and instead will release all copies on a "retain or destroy" basis. This approach will encourage analysts to build their own collection of documents and to establish "prep records" in the indexing of such records for future reference. A diminishing use of OCB facilities could be the result of this action. In our understanding, a library should itself control the retention and/or destruction of documents rather than to have such retention, and particularly destruction, determined on an individual basis by research analysts, since their viewpoint may be limited to their own sphere of interest. It is true that Area Records Officers could assist in the records management phases of this problem, but it appears that central control and standard procedure is both desirable and necessary, and this control should be exercised by OCB.

- d. OCB Proposal - Photograph and develop microfilm prior to dissemination and reproduce photographic prints of documents for which there is an inadequate number of copies for initial dissemination.

Comment: This may delay the dissemination of documents and may require considerably more personnel and equipment than is provided for in the study in order to eliminate these delays.

- e. OCB Proposal - Deposit in the Vital Materials Repository microfilmed copies of all incoming and CIA-produced intelligence.

Comment: Microfilming is not desirable for the reason stated in the comment with respect to bb above.

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- f. OAD Proposal - Retain microfilmed copies of all documents in the OAD library in Filmsort aperture cards for later reproduction as requested by research analysts.

Comment: This is provided in the system primarily, we assume, for the selection of documents by analysts through the inspection of microfilm contained in Filmsort aperture cards and for the reproduction of documents requested by the analysts. The review of the original document rather than microfilm is always preferable, because microfilm does not permit the reproduction of colored maps and charts frequently contained in original documents; and, unfortunately, microfilm reproductions are rarely as good as the original in quality, making the microfilm reproduction more difficult to read. This is particularly true when the original may be a carbon copy or is itself a reproduction, such as an xerox or ditto copy.

- g. OAD Proposal - Reproduce from microfilm, prints of documents which are received in inadequate number for initial dissemination and also for fulfilling requests of research analysts.

Comment: The study does not consider the question of the source of single or inadequate copies in order to determine whether additional copies should be obtained from such sources. Instead, it apparently assumes that this is not possible. In addition, it is pointed out that the originals, which will on the whole be  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ " (84 sq. inches) in size, will, when reproduced by the small mobile photostat machine proposed, be reduced to  $5 \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ " (42 sq. inches) and will result in approximately a 50% reduction from the size of the type contained on the original document. Most originals will be written through the use of a standard typewriter, more than likely with elite type, intended for easy reading for individuals with normal or corrected vision. A 50% reduction will involve eye strain which will be accentuated by the fact that the microfilmed print will not be nearly as legible as was the original.

7. Since the very beginning of this proposal, dating back to 1951, the basic question which we have attempted to discuss is whether or not the proposed use of the microfilm process and its application is a valid one. Government and industry have had many unfortunate experiences in the use of microfilm. This is particularly true where the original has been destroyed with the feeling of security in the possession of a microfilm copy, only to find later that the image had faded or disappeared completely or was otherwise not readable, frequently due to the poor condition of the original document. A government-wide study is now being made of the application and use of microfilm by the General Services Administration as indicated by their Circular #44 dated 9 July 1953, copy of which is attached as Appendix 14.

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6. Microfilming has too many limitations and variables to be used indiscriminately. Some of these limitations and variables are as follows:
- a. The condition of the original must be nearly perfect.
  - b. The size of the original or reproduction has limitations in order to retain quality.
  - c. Microfilm can be reproduced only in black and white, not in color.
  - d. Microfilm images may fade or disappear completely if not carefully processed under controlled conditions by qualified personnel, even though the image appears clear after processing.
  - e. Difficulty of producing microfilm prints in volume.
  - f. Difficulty in indexing and cross-referencing filmed reels by subject matter.
  - g. Difficulty in using for reference purposes where frequent reference on a given subject is desired due to the numerous reels on which information may appear.
  - h. The extension of this procedure and the application on an Agency-wide basis could, over a period of years, result in the unavailability of many important intelligence documents if the experience of other Government and industrial activities can be used as criteria. The proposal places too much reliance on microfilm for active reference use and on the individual analyst to destroy the correct documents.

In short, it may be said that for reference purposes there is no adequate and guaranteed substitute for the original document, particularly where it is to be used as an active reference document, as in the proposal by OGD.


7. The study does not deal with the questions that have been raised above, but rather assumes that all of these questions have been considered and resolved by OGD. We believe that we would be more than derelict in the performance of our duties not to advise on these matters, since it is obvious that we oppose the use of microfilm as proposed in this instance. We believe that alternative methods of solving the problems inherent in the OGD activity should be examined. One possibility, in broad general terms, is the establishment of such research procedures and regulations as will preclude the retention by research analysts of intelligence material which is not concerned with current

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projects, and the establishment of such procedures and reference regulations within OSD as would guarantee the availability of original documents without the necessity for reproduction, except in cases where an inadequate quantity was initially received by the agency. It is inconceivable that research analysts could possibly be using the quantity of documents which has been accumulated in their offices over the period of the last seven years, nor that they are likely to be able to use the material which they will accumulate in future years. The problem increases with each year of operation. Also, under present practices, dissemination and research procedures denies the availability of intelligence material on an Agency-wide and Government-wide basis through the facilities of OSD, as is evident by the proposal, and is resulting in the agency having to resort to inadequate and expensive means of guaranteeing the availability of intelligence material.

This statement of our position in connection with this matter is absolutely objective and sincere. Our position has no relation to the establishment of reproduction facilities by OSD outside of the control of OSD, which I understand has been reported to you. The number of reproduction personnel and the number of pieces of equipment which they propose to use in this process are negligible when considered alone. More important, however, is the question of good management of records; and our point of view is concerned primarily with that question. I believe that the information contained herein is of sufficient importance to warrant reconsideration of the entire project, as it is never too late to avoid an error, if the implementation of the proposal does involve error. You have urged and insisted on several occasions that we be firm in our position when we have the courage of our convictions supported by good judgment, experience, and sound reasoning. For that reason, and in order to be as helpful as possible, we have not concurred in the attached study.

Your decision in the above matter is awaited with interest, and, whatever it may be, we will be wholehearted in the implementation thereof.

  
Chief,  
General Services Office

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## Attachments:

Appendix A (Reference Study)  
Appendix B (OSD Circular #42)

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